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Correspondence.

THE ART AMATEUR BUREAU OF PRACTICAL DECORATION.

ARRANGEMENTS have been perfected for furnishing readers of The Art Amateur with the best practical assistance in house decoration upon the following terms, the fee in every case to be prepaid:

Furnishing sample colors for exterior painting of a house, \$5.

Furnishing sample colors for tinting walls and ceiling and for painting wood-work, with directions regarding carpets and window draperies, \$5 per room.

Furnishing sample colors for tinting cornice and ceiling, and patterns of paper hangings for frieze and wall, with samples of proper materials for window draperies and portières, and sample of carpet, where rugs are not used, with full directions as to arrangement, \$10 per room.

For bachelors' apartments, or a small "Flat" of, say, seven rooms, sample colors will be furnished for walls, ceilings and wood-work, and general directions given as to floor coverings and window draperies, for \$25.

For the furnishing and decoration of large or expensive "flats" where considerable outlay is contemplated, special charges will be made, based upon the requirements of the work.

For the highly ornate or elaborate decoration and furnishing of single rooms, such as drawing or dining-rooms in city residences, or where a special or distinctive treatment is desired, designs, specifications and estimates will be furnished, with competent superintendence if required, the charges in each case to be proportionate to the service rendered.

In cases where samples of draperies or carpets are sent to persons at a distance, in connection with the color treatment of a room, it is understood that the samples will be matched as closely as possible. In some cases, perhaps, the same material may be found, but this must necessarily be infrequent. The same rule applies to samples of paper hangings.

We are ready at all times to supply the materials indicated by samples sent, such as wall papers, window draperies, portières or carpets, and merely a nominal charge, to cover incidental expenses, will be made for purchasing the same.

Orders to purchase must be accompanied with a statement of the quantity of material required, and in the case of wall papers, window or door draperies, actual drawings with accurate measurements of the walls and openings should be sent.

Should it be desired, we can supply furniture, Oriental rugs and carpets, ornaments and bric-à-brac—indeed, everything required to carry out a scheme of artistic decoration, whether for a single room or an entire house.

In such cases we will, as far as possible, send patterns and samples with price attached, and when the quantity of a material required is determined upon, a post-office order or draft to pay for the same must invariably be sent with the order to buy. This purchasing department is conducted for the convenience of our readers, and it must distinctly be understood that we can incur no pecuniary risk in the matter.

PERSONAL ANSWERS TO INQUIRIES.

WE must respectfully decline to give information by mail. To this rule we can make no exception, unless the correspondent desires us to hand the letter to an expert who will supply drawings and samples of colors in consideration of receiving a professional fee. Whatever information of general interest we can impart through these columns we cheerfully give without charge. But it is too much for correspondents to expect us to write to them personally and give expert opinions for their individual benefit, which we must not publish. The conditions on which we will furnish private information in regard to house decoration and furnishing by mail are published at the head of this department.

FIRST STEPS IN PORTRAIT PAINTING.

C., Lexington, Conn.—To paint a portrait in oil, begin by sketching in the outline and general composition with charcoal. Then take burnt sienna and ivory black diluted with turpentine, and make a reddish brown tone, with which lay in the outline and general masses of shadow of the head and figure, leaving the canvas bare for the lights. While this is drying—and it will soon do so—lay in the background. Let this harmonize with the flesh and hair, being either lighter or darker in value. For a man's portrait, a dark background is generally used. A good tone of dark greenish gray relieves ordinary flesh that is not too pale. Make this ground with yellow ochre, white, burnt Sienna, Antwerp blue, raw umber, and ivory black. A little madder lake is added in parts to give color and softness. The background having been thus laid in, begin to paint the hair, and put in the masses of light and shade, very simply at first, leaving the details and finish to a later painting. The coat is next laid in, the aim being to get the general effect of all the surroundings arranged before painting the flesh, as all these things influence the color. Paint from life, when possible, in preference to using a photograph, and see that the same tone of background is placed behind the head of the sitter, a piece of drapery, wall or whatever may be selected, and try to copy the effect exactly, painting the relations just as you see them before you. Before laying in the head, see that the undertone of burnt Sienna and black is dry. Begin with the light mass and lay in one flat tone which is not as light as the highest light on the face, but select a medium tone. Make this with white, yellow ochre, vermilion, madder lake, light red, and a little cobalt, adding enough raw umber, and ivory black to give quality to the color. Next, put in the shadows, laying them in also in one flat tone, without any reflected lights or details as yet. Select a medium tint which is not as dark as the darkest touches of shadow. For this tone use raw umber, yellow ochre, white, ivory black, light red, cobalt, and madder lake. Paint heavily, using plenty of color. When the shadows and lights are thus laid in look at the head from a distance and see whether the proper tones are correct. If they are, proceed to carry on the portrait by adding the half tints, which are gray in quality. Use white, yellow ochre, cobalt, ivory black, and light red for the general half tints, and when they are painted, take a clean flat bristle brush and unite the edges of these tones, by dragging the half tint into the shadow, and the light over into the half tint. This gives roundness and softness, and the head begins to model. We now add more color

in the cheek and chin, using madder lake, vermilion, yellow ochre, white, with a little raw umber and ivory black. Deepen the accents of shadow wherever necessary, adding burnt Sienna. Put in the reflected lights and add the high lights. Work up the features with care, using small flat pointed sables for fine touches and careful drawing, while for the general painting and laying in, large flat bristle brushes have been employed.

To paint the mouth, use light red, madder lake, vermilion, white, and a little cobalt with raw umber and ivory black. Make the lower lip a warmer and brighter red than the upper, using yellow ochre, vermilion, madder lake, white, and a little ivory black in the highest light. The soft, dark, purplish tones under the eyes are painted with cobalt, white, light red and ivory black. Let these tones melt into the surrounding flesh at the edges, using a soft clean brush to unite them. In the greenish gray half tints which sometimes occur around the mouth, chin and other parts of the face, use yellow ochre, white, cobalt, a very little madder lake, and ivory black. In young, fair faces, these tints are bluer and softer. Lay in the white of the eye with a tone of warm gray, made with yellow ochre, white, ivory black, cobalt and light red. Then into this touch the high light with a small pointed brush, using white, a little yellow ochre, and a mere touch of ivory black. In painting the pupil of the eye, use burnt sienna and ivory black. Soften the lid against the eyeball with a dark gray tone, suggesting the shadows of the eyelashes. Do not let the iris show a hard, round outline, but soften it at the top and let it lose itself a little in the lashes. Let a gray half tint interpose between the eyebrows and the flesh. The same kind of gray half tint should be used to soften the hair where it meets the face. Do not blend beyond the process already described, if uniting the edges only, of the tones where they meet. When the painting is taken up each day, be sure it is quite dry. Before beginning to paint, oil out the canvas each time, using clean poppy oil and a flat bristle brush, and with a clean rag wipe off all superfluous oil. If the color does not dry quickly enough, add one drop of Siccatis de Courtray to five drops of oil, and use this as a medium with your colors while painting. When the picture is finished and dry, varnish with Soehnée's French retouching varnish.

TO PAINT PURPLE WISTERIA IN OILS.

CARLOTTE, St. Paul.—The directions for painting purple wisteria in mineral colors, given in the February number of The Art Amateur cannot be used for painting in oil. Use for the general tone, permanent blue, white, madder lake, a little raw umber, yellow ochre and ivory black; in the shadows, permanent blue, yellow ochre, light red, raw umber, madder lake and ivory black. In the very deep side accents of dark use burnt Sienna instead of light red, and omit the raw umber and yellow ochre. The high lights are painted with cobalt or permanent blue, white, madder lake, yellow ochre, and a very little ivory black. For the green leaves use Antwerp blue, white, cadmium, vermilion and ivory black. In the shadows use cadmium, raw umber, Antwerp blue, white, burnt sienna, and ivory black. For the reddish touches seen in young leaves, use madder lake in place of burnt Sienna, and for the stems the same colors given for the leaves, varying the proportion when necessary.

PAINTING APPLE-BLOSSOMS IN OILS.

CARLOTTE, St. Paul.—(1) From your description we suppose your design to be merely branches of apple-blossoms, without any foreground or other accessories. In this case make the background, showing to one side, and behind the branches, to represent sky-blue overhead, with light floating clouds lower down, showing the blue sky through in parts. The colors to use for the blue sky are cobalt, white, with a little light cadmium, and vermilion; also a very little ivory black.

(2) To paint the apple-blossoms, lay them in at first with a general tone of warm gray, dividing the clusters into simple masses of light and shade; proceed to add the high lights and touches of red and pink to the light mass; and into the mass of shadow, which should not be laid in too dark, paint the deep accents and touches of color, putting in whatever details are necessary to give finish. Keep the effect as simple as possible, not attempting to paint each separate blossom and bud, unless the design is the full size of nature. In that case paint in detail a few of the blossoms that are the most prominently seen, and let the rest be suggested more or less carefully, according to their position, those in the distance being little more than mere masses of light and shade. Paint the general tone of warm gray, with yellow ochre, white, a little vermilion, adding a little ivory black and raw umber. For the shadows use yellow ochre, ivory black, light red, cobalt, white and madder lake. In the deeper accents substitute burnt Sienna for light red, and omit the white. Paint the high lights with white, yellow ochre, a little madder lake and a very little ivory black. In the buds use vermilion and madder lake together, with white, yellow ochre, raw umber and ivory black, shading with the colors already given.

(3) For the leaves use with Antwerp blue white, cadmium, ivory black and light red, adding burnt Sienna and raw umber in the shadows, omitting light red. In the lighter warmer greens use vermilion instead of light red, and for cooler greens use madder lake in place of light red and permanent blue or cobalt instead of Antwerp blue. For the branches use bone brown, ivory black, white, madder lake and permanent blue, adding burnt Sienna in the shadows. Make the half tints very gray.

A CHAIR-BACK DESIGN.

MRS. G. M.—The design for a chair-back in supplement plate 404 in the December number may be worked in several ways, although the design is for South Kensington stitch, and to be embroidered in crewels and silks. The stems are done in brown silk, shading into grays for the high lights. The foliage is done in olive green crewels, silks being used in the high lights. It is well not only to work silk in with the crewels, but on the edges or on the tops of outward curves to embroider patches of the silk. The flowers are in cream white silks, with yellow and brown centres. The oranges are in deep reddish orange crewels, lighting up into yellow silks. These are in solid Kensington stitch working round and round. The parallel lines indicate the deepest tints. This scheme of color is intended for reddish brown plush or satin. As to the border, work the lines in outline stitch with heavy gold silk, or couch down gold thread. The entire design would be well outlined in gold thread. The same design can be made on any color entirely in couchings of gold thread; or it might be worked in outline stitch on gray linen.

"HOW TO BECOME AN ILLUSTRATOR."

A. C. F., Brooklyn, wants to know "how to become an illustrator." If you can draw well, practise in pen and ink to make such a copy as can be reproduced in fac-simile by one of the various photographic processes, which now are much used in place of engraved wood-blocks for illustrating purposes. The only materials necessary are a steel pen, jet black ink (Reynolds's liquid Japanese India-ink is the best) and smooth white paper or

Bristol-board. All the drawing must be done in black lines, as gray lines or "wash" effects cannot be reproduced by the process. Satisfactory process reproductions are made sometimes from crayon or charcoal drawings done upon rough-grained paper; but in such cases, as a rule, the stomp should not be used. Illustrations for the use of the wood-engraver are usually wash-drawings in India ink, or lamp-black mixed with Chinese white, and Payne's gray mixed with Chinese white, which latter gives soft, pleasant effects; or oil paintings made with ivory black and silver white on mill-board or Academy-board. Sometimes copies in colors are given to the engraver to reproduce upon the block, but this presupposes unusual skill and artistic judgment on his part. A picture for the engraver's use should be made at least half as large again as the size it is to be reproduced, and it should be neatly mounted on stiff cardboard, with at least an inch margin. It is generally photographed on to the block the required size, and the engraver keeps the original before him to work from as he cuts away the reduced copy on the box-wood. To learn to draw in pen and ink, study the instructions published in The Art Amateur in July, 1883, and the pen drawings reproduced therewith by photo-engraving process. Any line drawing in pure black and white can be mechanically reproduced for illustrating purposes. But we need hardly say before you can "become an illustrator," you must be a good draughtsman.

CONCERNING CHINA PAINTING.

H. C. M., Springfield, Mo.—(1.) White enamel, used in small quantities, is put on in little touches where jewels, embroidery, lace, and high lights of any kind are required. It can be mixed with other colors and used with other unfired paint. (2) The La Croix colors which come in tubes are already vitreous, prepared with flux in the proper proportions. With powder colors it is difficult to arrange the exact proportions for mixing, without experience, therefore, it is better for beginners to use the tube colors. (3) The colors especially prepared for grounds must not be mixed with others. If kept entirely separate they can be fired at the same time. (4) If mixed with others the grounding colors will change in different ways in firing, some turning darker, some lighter, and so on. (5) Gilding should never be put over other colors and should not even be allowed to trespass upon the edge of an adjacent color.

H. S., Atlanta, Ga.—Flux causes the colors to flow smoothly. Like them, it is sold either in tubes or in powder. When fired it forms a transparent glaze. All colors used for china painting contain flux—the light more than the dark, and the ground colors most of all. Adding flux to the ordinary colors makes them suitable for grounds. Use about one third flux with the dark colors, and less than a third with the light ones.

SUNDRY QUERIES ANSWERED.

B. T. S., Toledo.—Our offer of ten dollars' worth of books to the getter-up of a club of ten subscribers to The Art Amateur who sends \$30 with the list of names is not restricted to art books. You can order to the extent of \$10 any books or periodicals you please at the regular prices.

MRS. P. S. L., Eureka Springs, Ark.—You would have found no trouble in making the colors adhere to the egg if you had used with them a very little gum. All the colors should be mixed with Chinese white before applying them.

MRS. S., Wilkes Barre, Penn.—We recommend Miss McLaughlin's "China Painting," published by Robert Clarke & Co., Cincinnati, price 75 cents; also "China Painting," by Lewis, containing 16 colored plates, published by Cassell & Co., New York, at \$2.50.

A. E. M., Gardiner, Me.—Engravings and crayon pictures may be hung against a wall of almost any warm, subdued neutral tint.

S. L. PURDY, San Francisco.—There are several ahead of you in requests for special monograms, but we shall try and publish what you ask.

SUBSCRIBER, Brooklyn.—Lessons in "drawing in black and white" are given by Mr. George Gibson, whose studio is at the corner of Fourth Avenue and 14th Street, New York.

E. A. D., Conn.—"Crayon Portraiture," published by John Keeler, 164 Fulton St., New York, price 35 cents, gives all the information you seek.

L., Sunbury, Pa.—(1) Prepared gold for the use of amateurs is sold by J. Marsching & Co., 27 Park Place, New York. (2) It may be fired in a portable kiln. (3) Very full directions concerning the application of metallic paints were given by Miss McLaughlin in this Magazine for October, 1883.

S., Peoria, Ill.—"A list of the best books on the history and practice of the fine arts, and the best illustrated works on costume" would take more space than we can afford here. However, we may recommend D'Anvers's "Elementary History of Art" (Scribner & Welford), Racinet's "Costume" (J. W. Bouton) and Chalmers's "History of Fashion" (Scribner & Welford). Consult also the "partial list of The Art Amateur prize books" published last month in the Magazine.

A SUBSCRIBER.—The best way to decorate your wooden shoes would be to bronze them with lustra colors, such as are advertised in our columns, and paint upon the instep some quaint little design, such as the little cupid dancing on a ball given in the May number of The Art Amateur, page 137; or you might take the two designs on page 133, putting one on each shoe. Directions for treatment are given with these designs. Paint the inside, as far as you can reach, dark red.

B. T. S., Toledo, O.—(1) For crewel work avoid bright and vivid hues, especially of greens; sober tints of olive, sage, and dead leaf color blend best. (2) Bolton sheeting is a coarse, twilled cotton fabric, seventy-two inches wide, of a beautiful soft creamy color, which improves much in washing. It is inexpensive and an excellent ground for embroidery, either for curtains, bedspreads, chair coverings or aprons.

S. T., Boston.—Art work of amateurs is received by D. W. Granbery & Co., 20 John St., New York, their charge being ten per cent commission on sales.

B. S. T., Newark, N. J.—(1) The Student's Sketching Outfit, advertised by Henry Leidel at \$5, is very good indeed for the price. Full particulars are given in the advertisement. (2) The only necessary materials for coloring photographs are ordinary water-colors, two sable hair pencils, one fine and the other thick, a bottle of clean gum water and a small piece of sponge. A hand magnifying glass is useful, as it enables one to see whether the pupils of the eyes and other minute touches on dark grounds are made correctly.